

MINUTES SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION

DATE: Wednesday, May 31, 2023

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: San Juan Memorial Library
1010 S. Standard
San Juan, Texas 78589

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mario Garza, Mayor
Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez, Mayor Pro Tem
Adina "Dina" Santillan, Commissioner,
Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo, Commissioner
Adina "Dina" Santillan, Commissioner
Marco "Markie" Villegas, Commissioner
Ricardo Palacios, City Attorney

STAFF PRESENT: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary
Sandra Guajardo, Administrative Assistant of Fire
Leandro Sifuentes, Interim Chief of Police
Leroy Gonzalez, Director of Finance
Veronica Hernandez, Human Resources Coordinator
Armandina Sesin, Library Director
Monica Gomez, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning
Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation/ Public Works
Juan Carlos Martinez, Interim Director of Utilities
Mary Enriquez, Court Administrator
Pat Karr, Director of Information Technology
Ruben Guajardo, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation. PAL

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**
Mayor Mario Garza called meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.
- II. **INVOCATION:**
Benjamin Arjona, City Manager led the Invocation.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**
Mayor Mario Garza led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no Public Comments.
- V. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. **Recognition of the Recipients of the San Juan Parks and Recreation Schools of the Year Award.**

DISCUSSION: Patrick Willingham, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated throughout the year in the presentations that our kids are doing an outstanding job in our programs and representing the city and out of state. Every year, we recognize the schools that outshine due to their participation and outstanding performance. Mr. Willingham proudly recognized Carmen Elementary as our champion in the elementary division. Coach Gale and Principal Mr. Ramirez stated on behalf of Carmen Elementary that they thanked the City Commission for everything that they do for the school from the beginning of the school year to the end. He stated that there is always motivation for the kids to participate because eventually they will go to PSJA Bears and show their experience once they get there. Mr. Willingham recognized Austin Middle School as our champion in the middle school division. Coach Ramos, the male coordinator, and Coach Ortiz, the female coordinator, were present. Coach Ramos stated that he tells the kids to go home and tell their parents that this is an investment and to do better at whatever it is that they do. Mr. Willingham recognized one of the program coordinators, Miss Gloria Vela, as they do an outstanding job, helping coordinate the facilities as it gets busy and becomes a big task because we have middle school sports, high school sports, and city sports going on. They also make sure the facilities are available to us as needed. Mr. Willingham thanked the city commission for all their support. Mayor Mario Garza asked if we were going to be using the facilities during the summer, to which Mr. Willingham responded, yes, we have the gyms, track, volleyball, middle school volleyball league, track and field, and our tennis program as well as our swimming program. All those

facilities will be used. Mayor Mario Garza recommended getting with the district so that we can run the same programs year-round in the future.

B. Construction Update on New City Hall/ Transit Terminal.

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, stated that Edgar Villanueva with ERO Architects and Gilbert Enriquez with ECON were present to give an update on the construction of the new city hall project. Mr. Enriquez informed the commission that they are 85 percent complete and everything is going great. It's a little slower than what we anticipated due to a lot of circumstances. One of the major circumstances was that we received our transformer a month ago, and now we're starting to power up the building. There have also been a lot of material shortages in all industries. Mr. Enriquez added that he would like to have a walkthrough of the facility sometime just so that they can see how great it looks. Mr. Enriquez stated that the project should be done and furnished by August, and that he will hold meetings every two weeks to provide updates.

C. Presentation on Departmental Reports: Department of Finance, Fire Department, Police Department, Municipal Court, and Department of Utilities.

1. Department of Finance Monthly Report.
2. Fire Department Monthly Report.
3. Police Department Monthly Report.
4. Municipal Court Monthly Report.
5. Department of Utilities Monthly Report.

DISCUSSION: Mayor Pro Tem Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez asked Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation/Public Works, if they were ready for the brush pick-up and gutters due to the tropical depression happening at the gulf. Mr. Garza responded that, hopefully, by the end of next week, they will be catching up to where they need to be. The gutters have been cleaned, but due to the rain, they haven't been able to catch up. Mr. Garza added that his staff has been working on certain areas already with the vector truck and with the assistance of Juan Martinez, Interim Director of Utilities. Mr. Garza stated he received calls for sandbags, but they don't have any sandbags made at this point, but they would work on them as soon as they got authorization to do so. Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo inquired about the abandoned houses with tall grass. Mr. Garza stated they came up with a plan in which, in case of an emergency cutting, he wouldn't need to go through any of the paperwork. He would take a picture before and after and submit it to Code Enforcement, and they would proceed with the invoice with the amount due. Mayor Mario Garza asked Leandro Sifuentes, Interim Chief of Police, for status on the incident that occurred at San Juan Municipal Park and if they had an estimate of the cost of damages. Patrick Willingham, Director of Parks, stated that they got most of the estimated cost of damages, which is close to \$25,000, just in the restrooms. Mayor Garza asked if we ever made a request for cameras, to which Mr. Willingham replied no.

VI. APPOINTMENTS

A. Consideration and Action to Appoint, Re-appoint and/or Remove one (1) Board Member of the San Juan Police Athletic Board.

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that the San Juan PAL Board had received Andrew Garza's resignation letter. Staff is requesting that the nomination of a new member be taken into consideration in order to fill out his remaining term until April 25, 2024. Mrs. Escalante mentioned this opening had been advertised on the city's social media and website for six weeks. Mayor Mario Garza asked Ruben Guajardo, PAL Director, if his board has made any suggestions as far as extending the acceptance of applications to see if there's anyone who might be interested. Mr. Guajardo responded as per the board; they haven't discussed it yet since we haven't had a chance to meet due to the weather and school deadlines. Mayor Garza recommended meeting with his board first to discuss the application process to see if they had any recommendations.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to tabled item and was seconded by Commissioner Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0).

B. Consider Appointment of New Board Members to the City of San Juan - San Juan Princess and San Juan Queen.

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager stated one of the things is that an initiative saw that the City of San Juan can have their own princess and their own queen so that they can represent the city like for instance any groundbreaking, ribbon cutting and Noche De Paz. This will be more than anything someone to represent the city in that capacity of a princess and a queen.

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Mayor Mario Garza appointed Karina Duran
Mayor Pro Tem Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez appointed Sarahi Cantu
Commissioner Marco "Markie" Villegas appointed Rachel Molina
Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan appointed Jessica Garcia
Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo appointed Ronnie Alvarez

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez. Motion Passed (5-0).

C. Consider Removal and Appointment(s) Related to the San Juan EDC Board.

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary stated she had attached the San Juan EDC bylaws, member list and attendance roster in their packets.

Commissioner Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to remove Nickie Ybarra and appoint Jesse Ramirez and was seconded by Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan. Motion Passed (5-0).

D. Consider Appointment of a member of the City Commission as Mayor Pro-Tempore.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to nominate Marco "Markie" Villegas for Mayor Pro Tem and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0).

Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas thanked the community and his colleagues for the opportunity and is proud of how the City of San Juan has been functioning due to the harmonious and great support from each other.

VII. RESOLUTIONS

A. Consider Resolution to Approve a Waterline Access Agreement between the North Alamo Water Supply Corporation (NAWSC), the City of San Juan and Mosa Development, LLC. for the Mosa Multi-Family Subdivision.

DISCUSSION: Benjmain Arjona, City Manager stated this is a resolution as formality that needed to be brought before the commissioner over approval of the agreement with the North Alamo Water Supply.

Commissioner Ernest "Neto" Guajardo made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (5-0).

VIII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ALL THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:

A. Consideration and Action to Release the Escrow for the Public Improvements of the Replat of Lot 5, Texas National Subdivision, as Requested by Melden & Hunt, Inc.

DISCUSSION: Monica Gomez, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning, stated this request was for an escrow of \$56,380 for the public improvements to record the replat of lot number 5, Texas National Subdivision. Furthermore, a final walkthrough was conducted on May 12, 2023, and all the improvements were completed. Also, a copy of the report from the inspections was attached to the packet for their reference. Mrs. Gomez stated that staff recommended approval of the request.

Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0).

B. Discussion and Possible Action to Contract TRIMAD Consultants, LLC. to provide Engineering Services for Tierra de Palmas Subdivision Water Service Upgrades.

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, stated this subdivision is located near Stewart Road. The streets were going to get repaved, but they were looking into adding new water lines as they had many water leaks. Mr. Arjona informed the commission that TRIMAD, the engineer in rotation, would be doing the job. Juan Martinez, Interim Director of Utilities, stated that what we want to do is replace all servers and all crossings to prevent having to go back and tear up the street.

Mayor pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0).

C. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve a Change Order to the New City Hall/Transit Terminal for the Gateway Monument Sign in the Amount of \$500,000.00 and Authorize the Mayor to Execute all Related Documents.

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, indicated that this is an item that has been developed inside The Genesis Project at the Economic Development Corporation; nevertheless, now is the moment to determine if we want the Gateway Monument Sign. Mr. Arjona stated this was only an estimate because we haven't had a chance to actually go out and get an estimate. He noted that if they decided to move forward, they would need to go out and seek additional funding. Mayor Mario Garza stated his concern, considering that we don't have a concrete number, and asked if it was more than \$500,000.00. Edgar Villanueva stated

that this was just a conceptual design and that the actual construction documents for the gateway haven't been done. Mr. Villanueva stated that the approach that they would like to take is to add it to the scope of city hall so that we can expedite it; otherwise, the longer it takes, the more expensive it is. Mayor Garza asked if this would be part of City Hall Phase 1, to which Mr. Villanueva replied that was correct. Mr. Arjona noted that this was authorizing it for design only in order to be presented to get a more accurate amount.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve the design, as well as the proposal and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0).

- D. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve a Change Order to the New City Hall/Transit Terminal for the Canopies in the Amount of \$150,000.00 and Authorize the Mayor to Execute all Related Documents.**

DISCUSSION: Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, stated that when we first saw city hall, there were some canopies up in the front, and due to money constraints, we had to take them off and remove them from the scope of the project. However, Leroy Gonzalez and Bobby Villareal from Estrada's were able to locate some funds that we can utilize to bring the canopies back.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0). Motion passed (5-0).

- E. Discussion and Possible Action Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement Between the City of San Juan and the Lower Rio Grande Valley TPDES Stormwater Task Force Partnership, Inc. for Preparation of a Regional Texas Pollution Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Stormwater Permit Application and Stormwater Plan for the Lower Rio Grande Valley TPDES Stormwater Task Force.**

DISCUSSION: Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation/Public Works, stated this is a memorandum agreement for the stormwater. Mr. Garza stated that staff recommended approval of the MOU.

Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0).

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Consider Approval of City Commission Meeting Minutes:**
- January 10, 2023
 - May 8, 2023
- B. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of March 2023.**
- C. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of April 2023.**

Commissioner Leonardo "Lenny" Sanchez made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan. Motion Passed (5-0)

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The San Juan City Commission will Convene in Executive Session, in Accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Vernon's Texas Statutes and Codes Annotated, Government Code Chapter §551.071 (Consultation with Attorney)**

- 1. Pursuant to Section §551.071, CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Creation of an Arts District.**

Mayor Mario Garza recommended that item A.1 be discussed openly because legal consultation would not be necessary.

DISCUSSION: Miriam Cepeda, Executive Director, thanked the City Commission for allowing her to speak publicly to the community about the excited movement that we have regarding the downtown San Juan Cultural Arts District. The downtown San Juan Cultural Arts District is a 501c3 organization incorporated after a conversation with the city council in January 2023. However, the idea for a cultural arts district in the city of San Juan had developed over three years ago. During her tenure as the executive director at the Gelman-Stained Glass Museum, advocating for the city and the museum at the state level, she discovered funding opportunities budgeted by the state legislature that coalesced beautifully with downtown revitalization plans underway by the city of San Juan. It was then that the idea emerged for the creation of a cultural arts district, as it resonated profoundly as the area is filled with arts and cultural festivities year-round, with the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan Del Valle being the epicenter for religious tourism in the Rio Grande Valley and across the state, with over 1.5 billion visitors annually. She quoted how religion is a culture, and when the world closed its doors during the global pandemic, the basilica grounds, i.e., the City of San Juan, remained open, providing spiritual and mental nourishment for visitors in search of a safe haven. She added that Father Jorge will argue that "the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan is the nation's most visited shrine, more than the National Shrine in DC. Over the weekend alone, over 25,000 people come to the City of San Juan. However familiar the city may be with the numbers; The rest of the state and the county do not

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know this.” Not only does the Basilica open its doors to the community, but the City of San Juan hosts a series of public events year-round, as does the Gelman-Stained Glass Museum. Therefore, the district located in the heart of the city is at the crossroads of commerce, education, arts, religion, and government, and the district is a natural gathering place for a diverse cross-section of locals and visitors to the city. The district will work closely with various public and non-profit entities to effectively support their mission, which is to enhance and inspire the community of San Juan. The district will encompass its main institutions for arts and cultural tourism, including the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan, San Juan City Hall, San Juan Municipal Park, and the Gelman Stained Glass Museum. And let’s not forget those small businesses that, due to a lack of resources, have lacked support in marketing to the public outside of San Juan and will also be part of the district in which we support marketing efforts and collaborations. She added that everyone present knows that the best conchas in the state can be located at La Especial Bakery in the City of San Juan. This is where the district’s efforts will be allocated to supporting events and businesses such as these located within the district to attract economic development and revenue, unlike before. Furthermore, she looks forward to working together in the application process to be designated as a statewide cultural arts district by the Texas Commission on the Arts, as the district provides a true cultural identity for the Rio Grande Valley. Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan asked if the city has to put any type of money into the funding of grants. Ms. Cepeda responded that the city does not have to provide any type of funding; this is a non-profit organization, but we can partner up in some way in the future to fund the district for events. The city is not committed to providing funding. Once the district becomes designated, which it will be next year, once we move forward, they will be funding the district for event enhancements. She added that this will be a separate allocation of funding specifically for beautification in the district. She informed me that right now the state has funded 12.5 million for districts, and no one else can apply for that grant; only the people that are part of that district can apply for it. Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan asked if her main concern is whether they will have to provide any type of city resources or city funding to pay for a fee or anything else to create this art district. Ms. Cepeda added that she’s asking that with this partnership, she’s been working with the university at UTRGV, and maybe the city can consider collaborating together to get interns to help with the city for events in any way because it helps the intern become more culturized with the city and with what the city is actually doing, and then it all works together. Mr. Arjona, the City Manager, asked, as far as the cultural arts, will an amphitheater be one of the things that we can actually apply for some funding or something like that? Ms. Cepeda responded that it will have to be some sort of enhancement to the district, and that will help your application. So, anything that would enhance the district’s ability to attract visitors, like signage, banners, benches, canopies, and events, has an allocation for funding.

2. Pursuant to Section §551.071, CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning the Non-911 Emergency Ambulance Services.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to enter into executive session at 6:56 p.m. and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion Passed (5-0).

XI. RECONVENE

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to enter into executive session at 7:36 p.m. and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion Passed (5-0).

- A. The City Commission will Reconvene in Open Session to Take Necessary Action, if any, in Accordance with Chapter 551, Open Meetings, Subchapter E, Procedures Relating to Closed Meetings, and Requirements to Vote or Take Final Action in Open Meeting.
 1. Pursuant to Section §551.074 PERSONNEL MATTERS: Discuss the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee (Interim Director of Parks and Recreation).

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Leonardo “Lenny” Sanchez. Motion Passed (5-0).

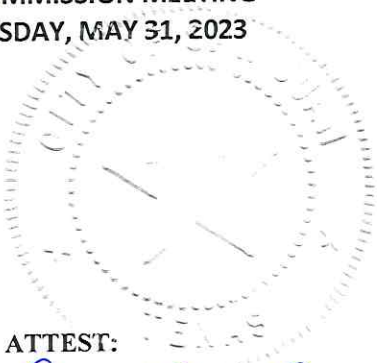
2. Pursuant to Section §551.071, CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning the Non-911 Emergency Ambulance Services.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve as discussed under executive session and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0).

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0).

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CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS



Mario Garza, Mayor

ATTEST:



Brenda Escalante, City Secretary